CLAIMS

1. A method of allocating a prize using a gaming apparatus, the apparatus including:

a primary controller for determining the award of a prize; and

an auxiliary controller capable of communication with the primary controller, the auxiliary controller being further capable of communication with one or more gaming terminals,

the method including the steps of:

receipt by the auxiliary controller of data from one or more of the gaming terminals, the data including at least one gaming terminal identifier and associated gaming terminal accumulated amount;

storage of the data in a memory accessible to the auxiliary controller;

being responsive to the gaming terminal accumulated amounts for deriving a total contributory amount;

communication from the auxiliary controller to the primary controller of the total contributory amount;

determination by the primary controller of whether or not to award a prize based upon the total contributory amount;

where the determination is to award a prize, communication from the primary controller to the auxiliary controller of data associated with the determination; and

analysis by the auxiliary controller of the data associated with the determination and the data stored in the memory to determine to which of the gaming terminals the prize is to be allocated.

2. A method according to claim 1 including the step of being responsive to each gaming terminal accumulated amount for deriving a respective contributory amount.

3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 including the step of being responsive to the gaming terminal accumulated amounts to derive a total accumulated amount.

4. A method according to claim 3 wherein the total contributory amount is a portion of the total accumulated amount.

5. A method according to claim 3 or claim 4 wherein the total contributory amount is any one of a proportion, fraction or percentage of the total accumulated amount.

6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the proportion, fraction or percentage is calculated by a comparison of a portion of the total accumulated amount and the total accumulated amount.

7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the auxiliary controller communicates with the primary controller via a wide area network having a bandwidth of less than or equal to 10,000 bits per second.

8. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the auxiliary controller communicates with the gaming terminals via a local area network having a bandwidth approximately equal to 10 mega bits per second.

9. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the apparatus includes a plurality of auxiliary controllers each capable of communication with the primary controller and each capable of communication with a respective set of one or more gaming machines.

10. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the auxiliary controllers and the primary controller are geographically separate and each of the auxiliary controllers are disposed at separate venues.

11. A method according to any one of the preceding claims including the step of communication from the auxiliary controller to the primary controller of an auxiliary controller identifier.

12. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the step of storage of the data in a memory accessible to the auxiliary controller includes storing a list of the gaming terminal identifiers and the associated gaming terminal accumulated amounts ordered chronologically as received by the auxiliary controller.

13. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the auxiliary controller maintains an inventory of gaming terminal identifiers and is responsive to a signal from the primary controller for transmitting changes in the inventory to the primary controller.

14. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein a contributory amount is communicated to the primary controller once for each of a predefined polling period.

15. A method according to claim 14 wherein the predefined polling period is at least 2 seconds.

16. A method according to claim 14 or claim 15 wherein the predefined polling period is at least 1 second.

17. A method according to any one of the preceding claims including the step of communicating a win message from the auxiliary controller to the gaming terminal to which the prize is to be allocated.

18. A method according to any one of the preceding claims including the step of communicating a win message from the auxiliary controller to the primary controller.

19. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the method is performed at least once every 5 seconds.

20. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the method is performed at least once every 2 to 3 seconds.

21. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the gaming terminals include any one or more of the following:

a poker machine;

a point of sale register;

a mobile phone;

a personal computer;

an access control point; and

a television.

22. An apparatus for allocating a prize, the apparatus including:

a primary controller, an auxiliary controller and a plurality of gaming terminals,

the auxiliary controller having first communication means for receipt of data from one or more of the gaming terminals, the data including one or more gaming terminal identifier and associated gaming terminal accumulated amount,

the auxiliary controller having a memory for storage of the data;

the auxiliary controller having a processor for deriving a total contributory amount from the gaming terminal accumulated amount;

the auxiliary controller having second communication means for communication to the primary controller of the total contributory amount;

the primary controller having a comparator for determination of whether or not to award a prize based at least in part upon the total contributory amount;

the primary controller having access to the second communication means so as to communicate data associated with the determination to the auxiliary controller; and

the auxiliary controller being responsive to the data associated with the determination and the data stored in the memory so as to determine to which of the gaming terminals the prize is to be allocated.

23. An apparatus according to claim 21 wherein the first communication means is a local area network and the second communication means is a wide area network.

24. A method of allocating a prize in a gaming system having a primary controller, an auxiliary controller and a plurality of gaming terminals, the method including the steps of:

collating and storing data at the auxiliary controller indicative of accumulated amounts associated with one or more of the gaming terminals;

calculating a total contributory amount at the auxiliary controller;

communicating the total contributory amount to the primary controller;

using the primary controller to determine whether or not to award a prize and to determine data associated with the determination;

communicating the data associated with the determination to the auxiliary controller; and

using the auxiliary controller to determine to which of the gaming terminals the prize should be awarded.